



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**MUNA
KALATI**

SUMMARY

A. Executive Director Welcoming Notes.....	3
B. Mission and Vision	4
C. Governance and Leadership	4
1. Leadership Team	4
2. Advisory Council	5
3. Learning & Development	5
4. Recognition & Celebrations	6
D. Impact Highlights.....	7
1. An increased of book fairs dedicated to children books in Africa.....	7
2. Increased production of children books in Africa.....	7
E. Communication & Media	8
1. Participation on TV programs.....	8
2. Podcasts.....	8
3. Interviews.....	6
4. Content Creation	8
5. Renovation of MK Website	9
6. Increased covering of children book events.....	10
F. Programs	10
1. Research : Google News Fund.....	10
2. MK Ambassadorial Program.....	10
3. Adwen Kesen Initiative	10
G. Innovation	11
1. Launched Podcast on children book professionals in Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific 11	
2. Increased collaboration with children book professionals from the US, UK, Caribbean.....	11
3. Launch of MK Volunteer Program.....	11
4. Membership Development.....	11
H. Partnerships	12
I. Future Plans and Goals	13
1. Increase autonomy and capacity of the MK Cameroon Office.....	13
2. The need to coordinate planning of events on children book in Africa	13
3. Increase monetization of Muna Kalati Services.....	13
4. Develop digital solutions to solve the biggest problems in book industry.....	13
J. Lessons Learned and Recommendations.....	12
K. Resource mobilization and financial management	14
Contact Information and Additional Resources.....	14

A. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NOTES

2023 is one of the most defining years in Muna Kalati's history. We have done less but better. We decided to reduce the number of activities implemented to improve their quality. With time, we are making progress in fulfilling our organisational purpose.

To improve our effectiveness and maximise the use of available resources, we halt some existing programs which had no direct contribution to our financial sustainability. For example, in-person workshops such as *Reading for Pleasure* and *Reading for Healing* have been stopped, and the focus is more on digital activities and engagement.

At the governance and people management levels, we had talented individuals who tremendously increased our visibility. We also had some challenges in finding qualified personnel with experience in children's book publishing to head our operations in Ghana, as children's literature is an uncharted field with few trained professionals.

We also ventured into more partnerships to amplify our impact. One clear example is our partnership with Akoma Mba to organise the [Children and Comics Book Fair of Yaounde](#).

Thanks to Google's support, we conducted studies on the state of children's book publishing in eight African countries: Senegal, Ivory Coast, Conakry Guinea, Benin, Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia and South Africa.

As we wrap up, I want to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty, whose wisdom and power have enabled us to do this. Thanks also to the wonderful team I'm blessed with and the exceptional partners and shareholders who are supporting our work. Next year will surely be brighter, bigger, and better.



CHRISTIAN ELONGUÉ

Executive Director, Muna Kalati

B. Mission and Vision

i. Vision

Building a generation of confident and courageous African children.

The driving force behind our work is to ensure that all African children have access to a culturally relevant book as early as possible to build their identity and increase their confidence in facing the world with confidence while respecting diversity. We want parents to know where to easily find and buy books for their children, whether in Africa or the diaspora. Therefore, we create educational resources and training courses to facilitate this process.

ii. Mission

Our mission is to increase the visibility, accessibility, and use of educational resources for children in Africa and beyond through partnerships, networking and advocacy. We focus solely on children and young adults. In most African countries, professional publishers specialising in children's books are hard to find, and children's bookshops and libraries are extremely rare. We therefore felt the necessity to bridge this gap by improving digital access to books and resources on children and reading.

iii. Our four annual priorities

1. Developing and strengthening public policies on books and reading

Setting up public policies around children's books in countries where this is yet to be the case and consolidating existing policies to make them more operational.

2. Systematic documentation.

Documentation of all those involved in the children's book industry in Africa: authors, illustrators, publishers, distributors, booksellers, associations, reading centres and libraries, literary prizes... for each country. With this in mind, Muna Kalati helped set up [several awards](#) for local and pan-African initiatives at the *Salon du Livre Jeunesse et de la Bande dessinée de Yaoundé* (SALIJEY).

3. [Training](#) and professionalisation of book and reading [professionals](#)

So that the activities and books produced meet international quality standards. In this context, we have initiated training workshops on [financing publishing in Africa](#), integrating artificial intelligence in book publishing, and [digital publishing](#).

4. [Networking](#)

There's an African proverb that says, alone we go fast, but together we go further. Muna Kalati, through its network of associations, brings together and mobilizes book professionals in collaborative projects and partnerships around books and reading in Africa.

C. Governance and Leadership

1. Leadership Team

Muna Kalati has 10 active team members, including 8 staff, 1 volunteer, and 1 intern. We would not have been able to achieve much in 2023 without the help of God through them:

1. Executive Director: Christian Elongué (CMR)
2. Admin & Spiritual Officer: Pitit Yllara Sonia (Gabon)
3. Research & Engagement Officer: Herman Labou (Cameroon)
4. Head of Francophone Programs: Dr. Narcisse Fomekong (France)
5. Education Research Officer: Prince Teye-Gaga (Ghana)
6. HR Assistant: Wilhelmina Edore (Nigeria)
7. Finance Consultant: Mark Dela Koto (Ghana)
8. Communication Officer: Kenneth Opere (Ghana)
9. IT Consultant: Haris Fotso (Cameroon – Ghana)
10. Translation Officer: Christus Codo (Benin)

2. Advisory Council

Two new board members joined Muna Kalati: **Mrs. Katherine Adarkwa**, former Head of Administration and Human Resources at the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI) and **Mrs. Agnès Debiage**, a French librarian and CEO of ACDF Consulting.

Mrs. **Akoss Afori-Mensah** is no longer on the advisory council. The current members of the Advisory Council are:

- **Agnès Debiage**, librarian and publishing consultant (France)
- **Acèle Nadale**, CEO of Afrolivresque.com (Germany – Cameroon)
- **Kidi Bebey**, renowned author of children books (Cameroon – France)
- **Katherine Adarkwa**, Experienced Human resource manager (Ghana)

3. Learning & Development

This year, changing priorities and hybrid work models presented several challenges in developing our team. The People Management Unit (PMU) worked diligently to address these challenges through targeted learning interventions.

A key challenge was adapting training programs with the shift to remote/hybrid work. In-person events were replaced with virtual sessions, requiring new facilitation skills from managers. Videos, interactive activities, and breakout discussions kept learning engaging online.

Motivating teams through ongoing change was also difficult. We implemented monthly "check-in" calls for staff across departments to problem-solve and share updates collaboratively. This increased clarity and connectivity during periods of transition. Lastly, the company also experienced an increased demand for culturally relevant and diverse content, prompting the need for a more culturally aware and inclusive workforce.

To address these challenges, Muna Kalati's HR department implemented a range of Learning and Development (L&D) interventions tailored to the specific needs of the workforce:

- **Comprehensive digital marketing training programs** were rolled out to enhance employees' skills in online promotions, social media marketing, and content creation, aligning with the industry's evolving needs.
- **Specialized workshops and resources** were developed to equip employees with the tools and techniques for effective remote collaboration, communication, and time management. Tailored training sessions centered around cultural competence and sensitivity were introduced to foster a more inclusive and diverse work environment.
- **Upskilling** for new roles proved vital as the industry evolved rapidly.

- **Internal secondments** exposed staff to different areas of growth.

The next year will focus on further integrating digital learning platforms to facilitate continuous and personalised learning experiences. Managers will undergo additional coaching in hybrid facilitation techniques to optimise blended learning. Cross-training programs will be launched to improve versatility across teams. Emphasis will also be placed on strengthening the organisation's cross-cultural competence and leveraging diversity as a competitive advantage in the book industry.

4. Recognition & Celebrations

- Muna Kalati's work and contribution to advancing children's education across Africa were acknowledged at the 2023 Children Book Fair of Yaoundé, where we received the Prize for the best organisation promoting African children's books.
- **Hermann Labou** has been recognised as the best blogger for youth literature in the category Award for Excellence in Literary Journalism – SALIJEY 2023



Herman Labou, Partnership and Engagement Officer, has been recognised as the Best Employee of the Year 2023 for his consistency, dedication and hard work in advancing MK's mission.

D. Impact Highlights

MK influence has led to:

1. An increased of book fairs dedicated to children books in Africa.

About 8 national literary events dedicated to children books, comics and animations are being organised in Africa. From [Cameroon](#) to [Guinea Conakry](#), Burkina Faso and Gabon, [Senegal](#) and Ivory Coast, [Madagascar](#) to [Guadeloupe](#) etc., there has been an increased understanding on the importance of children books in early childhood education and this resulted in the many events, conferences and programs dedicated to it all across the continent. Muna Kalati contributed to this awakening through the various research and advocacy campaigns that we had with children book professionals on the continent. We are glad to see things moving and we know the best is yet to come.

2. Increased production of children books in Africa

Muna Kalati was proud to hear from African Authors that their desire to venture into children book writing was the fruit of inspiration drawn from our MK. Indeed, by raising the visibility of CB, we are also encouraging more people to pursue a research, publishing or writing career in the CB industry. For example, Guinaelle Kengne Stephanie, a former MK workshop Coordinator, published her first CB in 2021. Julien Kemloh also shared that he was encouraged to publish his first book: "**Cheikh Anta Diop - Healer of Zombies**" thanks to the work of MK. Boniface Dansou, a former MK Volunteer, also published his first children book: [Les Aventures d'Assia](#).



E. COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

Throughout 2023, Muna Kalati has been constantly reporting on Africa's children's book sector. This has included events, activities in the field, opportunities, competitions, children's book fairs, and new releases, to name but a few. This strategy has helped build bridges and encourage collaboration among children's book chain players.

Since June, we have used a crowdsourcing strategy to get more people to talk about Muna Kalati. The ambassador program was the key to the success of this strategy. The aim was to reach more people and, above all, to have a greater impact in the media. To inform new subscribers, sharing success stories generated a lot of reactions and engagement on our social networks. This strategy effectively kept them informed about Muna Kalati's mission.

Other communications and media engagements include the followings:

1. Participation on TV programs

In 2023, Muna Kalati participated in two television programmes on two of Cameroon's most important channels: [Nous chez vous](#) on Canal 2 Internationale and [Cameroun Feeling](#) on CRTV. During these two TV moments, the Association expanded on its history, achievements, activities in the field, and short-, medium-, and long-term projects.

2. Podcasts

Podcasts are the most recent communication tool added to our strategy. We found them to be very effective in reaching out to book professionals who are busy yet interested in learning about what is happening in the children's book sector. In 2023, **over 20 podcasts** were produced. Our podcasts are hosted on platforms like [Acast](#), [SoundCloud](#), and [Apple Podcasts](#).

Some of them are listed below:

- [Dessiner pour réécrire l'histoire négro-africaine par Djehuty Biyong](#)
- [Impact of ChatGPT on the book industry in Africa: How writers, publishers, and creatives can adapt to the changes brought by AI? - Muna Kalati Talk](#)
- [Entretien avec Alassane Cissé sur l'unicité du Salon du livre de la jeunesse et pour enfants de Dakar](#)
- [Béatrice Lalinon Gbado, une pionnière de l'édition jeunesse en Afrique](#)
- [Maison d'édition Gafé : Encourager la lecture jeunesse et préserver le patrimoine culturel](#)
- [L'Histoire de la BD au Cameroun avec Christophe Cassiau Haurie - Muna Kalati Talks 6](#)

3. Content Creation

During the year 2023, Muna Kalati, published about 85 articles, interviews, activity reports and book reviews. These publications were by various contributors, including Hermann Labou, Muna Kalati ambassadors Laurence Marianne Melgard (Guadeloupe), Zeinab Diomandé (Ivory Coast), Matiyem Kadjo, as well as Nsele Bomba Guilaine from Cameroon.

i. Analysis articles

A total of 23 articles were published on the Muna Kalati website. They dealt with various topics related to children's literature in Africa, with a particular focus on the on the players in this field in several African countries such as Guinea, Benin, Madagascar and others.

ii. Interviews

Muna Kalati conducted 16 interviews with promoters of children's literature. These interviews shed light on the work of these players and explore the prospects for the future of children's literature in Africa. Among interviewees included publisher Ulrich Talla Wamba, publisher [Diouf Yaya Sow Yaya Sow](#) and author Hashley Auguste. we also interviewed actors from the world of animation, [Rafaella Delle](#); educational consultants such as [Maame Pempeh](#); researchers such as [Dr. Nancy](#). All these varied interviews provided an overview of concrete actions, ideas and projections in the world of children's books and education in countries such as Kenya, Cameroon, Senegal, South Africa and Togo, to name but a few.

iii. Activity Reports

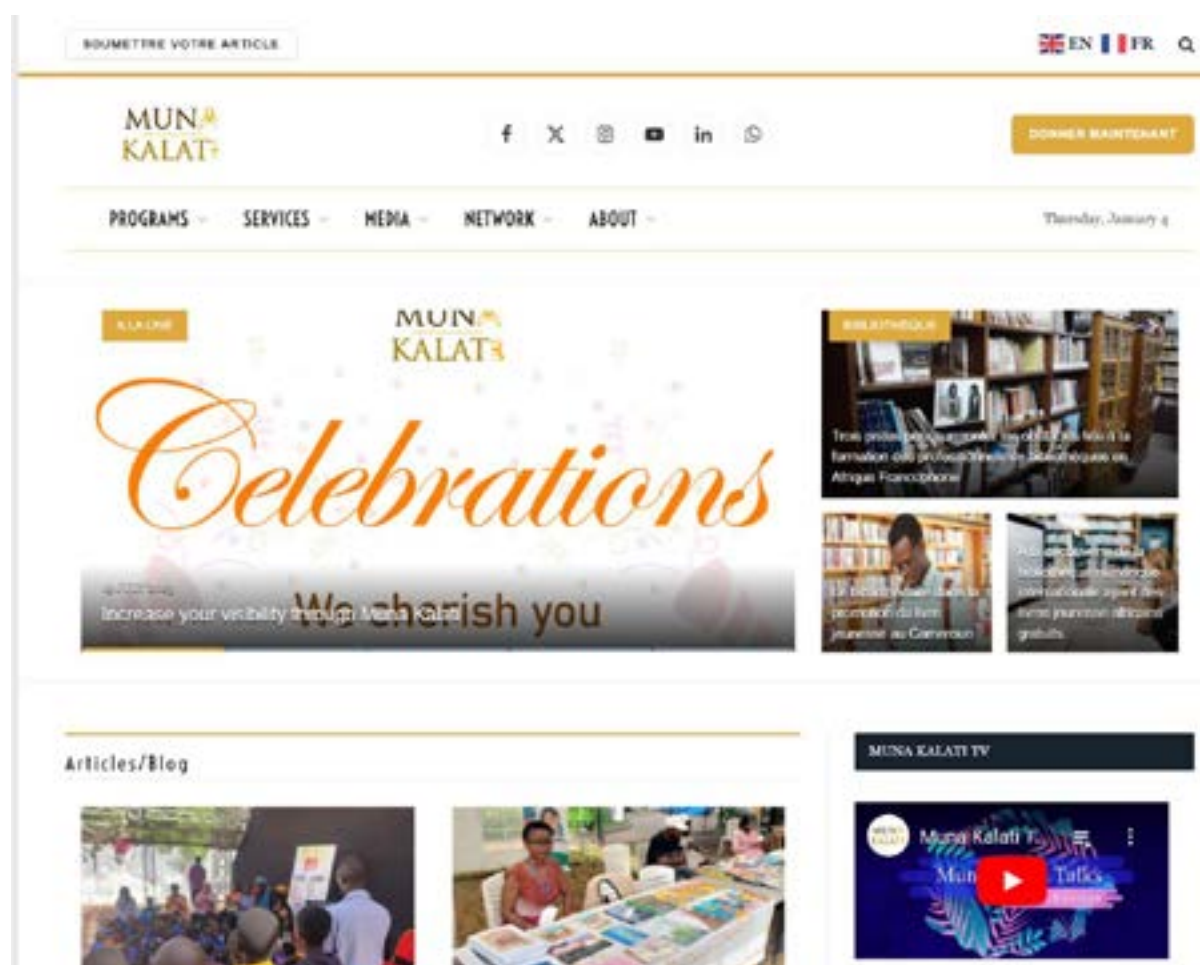
The platform has published 8 activity reports, mainly written by Muna Kalati ambassadors on activities in their respective countries. The ambassadors mentioned are Laurence Marianne Melgard from Guadeloupe (France), Zeinab Diomandé from Côte d'Ivoire and Matiyem Kadjio from Cameroon.

iv. Book Review

At least 6 book reviews were written and published, mostly by Nsele Bomba Guilaine.

All these publications have helped to highlight the players in children's literature in Africa, focusing on countries such as Guinea, Benin and Madagascar, as well as the activities carried out by Muna Kalati ambassadors in their respective countries. These efforts contribute to the promotion and development of children's literature in Africa.

4. Renovation of MK Website



To improve user-experience and facilitate search on the website, we recruited a consultancy firm to support us in redesigning and renovating the website. The project took three months to be completed, and the result is visible with the current website: www.munakalati.org

5. Increased covering of children book events

This year, Muna Kalati has increased its in-person presence by actively reporting children book and reading activities organized by the members of our community.

1. We covered some of the [books events from Adinkra Jeunesse](#), a children book publisher in Cameroon. One included the “[Picnic du petit lecteur](#)”, an annual event that gives children the chance to enjoy edutainment through children's books.
2. We covered reading workshop organized by [Rawda Kids in Douala](#) (Cameroon).

F. PROGRAMS

1. Research: Google News Fund

Research on the state of children book publishing in 8 African Countries: The findings will be useful for advocacy and decision making towards developing stronger reading policies.

2. MK Ambassadorial Program

[Muna Kalati](#) launched the [first edition](#) of the ambassador program from June to September 2023, to increase the democratization of books and reading. The 4 Ambassadors of the first cohorts were: [Sessi Dassi Mehoul](#) from Benin, [Matiyem Kadjio](#) from Cameroon and [Diomandé Mah Courhaco Zeïnab](#) from Ivory Coast and [Laurence Marianne-Melgard](#) (West Indies). Those selected for the 2nd cohort, from November to February 2024 are: [Sahara Abdi](#) (Kenya); [Ngong Valerine](#) and [Bethy Sengue Nkowa](#) (Cameroon) ; [Zongo T. Armelle](#) and Compaoré Marceline (Burkina Faso); [Oumy Keïta](#) (Ivory Coast); [Ami Christelle Zami](#) (Togo) and [Ahlem Driss](#) (Tunisia). Some of the training sessions are focused on:

- Introduction to Public Speaking and Pitching Skills and Tools
- Introduction to leadership and management
- Introduction to productivity skills and tools
- Introduction to writing and research tools.
- Introduction to Marketing and Branding
- How to Manage Time efficiently

develop their writing and illustrating talents, promote their work during the World Book Capital, and encourage creative expression. It also aims to promote the literary culture in Ghana and showcase the talents of Ghanaian children globally. Organized by Muna Kalati, in partnership with the **Ghana Books Development Council**, this workshop is expected to offer a unique opportunity for students to cultivate their writing and illustrating skills and showcase their creativity to the world.

G. INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

1. Launched Podcast on children book professionals in Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific

Audio content have increasingly become one of the preferred ways of content consumption. As such, **Muna Kalati** had to diversify its communication approach to include a podcast series, which is focus on authors, publishers, librarians and people who are actively promoting access to children book in their country or globally. This year, 3 episodes have been published.

2. Increased collaboration with children book professionals from the USA, UK, Caribbean.

There are many Africans living in the diaspora and even Afro-Americans who are very much interested in authentic stories from Africa, as it could help strengthen identity and cultural bonds. More than the previous years, Muna Kalati increased engagement with them and some original interviews were conducted with:

- **Mr. George Green**, an African American published children's book author and Co Founder of Little Global People, a business established to provide educational books, games, and workshops for kids and youth, centered around developing values.
- **Dr. Nancy D. Tolson**: an accomplished scholar and author who conducted research on West African folklore. Tolson's written works include *Black Children's Literature Got Blues: The Creativity of Black Writers and Illustrators* (2008) and *Tales of Africa* (1998).
- **Hasley Auguste**: an entrepreneur, author and cartoon producer. She is Franco-Haitian who created a whole universe for children focused on self-esteem and self-acceptance: *Little Nappy!* Hashley champions the importance of having heroes of diverse colours and backgrounds to identify with and develop the imagination of all children from a young age.

3. Launch of MK Volunteer Program

It aims at collaborating with volunteers who want to contribute their skills and expertise to further our mission. By becoming a volunteer, you can make a positive impact on children's literature, promote African and black voices, and empower young readers to become global citizens. Interested candidates are applying via research@munakalati.org

4. Membership Development

In the previous years, Muna Kalati has mainly be centring its activities on media: content creation, promotion of book professionals etc. This year, we gradually shift the focus to start [developing our membership base](#). As an association, we need a stronger network of representative across Africa to improve the impact of our advocacy initiatives and campaigns.

H. Partnerships

Strengthened Partnerships with African Publishers of Children Books such as:

- [Editions Gannal](#) in Guinea Conakry of Aliou Sow. Our executive director, Christian **Elongué**, was invited at the last Children book fair of Guinea in November 2023, where he [built connections](#) with book professionals in the country.
- [the Senegalese Association of Publishers](#) (ASE) and [Baobab édition](#). Together with Dakar Livres, they organised the first children book fair in Senegal, which was fully covered by Muna Kalati through interviews, podcasts and articles to increase visibility and ensure massive participation in the event.
- Partnered with Akoma Mba in organising the [Cameroon Children Book and Comic Fair](#) from 13 to 16th December 2023 in Yaoundé. This year edition focused on “Identities” while last year it was centered on several panels on children book publishing, [selling](#) and distribution.
- HiveMind Training on Digital Security for NGOs: Muna Kalati was represented by its Communication Officer, Judicael Kouassi, at a WACSI training on digital security for Nonprofits. This helped us strengthen our security systems and practices.

Established partnership with:

- [Saaraba Publishing house](#) : for the promotion of children's works and authors
- [Akamai kids](#) (Extra-curricular training structure for children using the Montessorri pedagogy): To promote its activities in the field
- Ghana Literacy Association: GLA is the Ghana chapter of the International Literacy Association (ILA), who celebrated and profiled our executive director Christian Elongue in their 2021 list of Global Literacy Champions. Following that award, we joined the local chapter with whom we collaborate on book promotion initiatives.
- Mpariaka Boky: a children book publishing house founded and managed by [Lalao Elina Razanadriaka](#) , a committed Malagasy author and publisher.
- [Ghana Book Development Council \(GBDC\)](#): We collaborated in the planning and implementation phases of the Accra World Book Capital. The Executive Director of Muna Kalati was invited to attend the launch of the AWBC by the GBDC, where the importance of books and reading in the African continent was showcased, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals were promoted. As part of its partnership with GBDC, Muna Kalati has outlined a series of activities that will be carried out during the AWBC year. These include Google News Validation Workshop, Muna Kalati Talks 17-21, and various digital workshops focused on audiobook production, artwork and cartoon creation, and creating diverse and inclusive children's books are among the activities planned. These activities aim to improve literacy and promote [African children's literature](#) while also fostering cross-cultural storytelling and collaboration.

I. Lessons Learned

1. Digital technology has had a significant impact on the industry, with e-book and audio formats more common in English-speaking countries than in French-speaking ones, helping to overcome the problem of book distribution in Africa.
2. There is a growing interest in children's literature in Africa, which has led to the proliferation of children's book fairs, especially in 2023. In light of the above, it is important to step up our presence in the field. Through this strategy, Muna Kalati can raise its profile and expand its network.

3. The various interviews conducted and described above have shown many commendable initiatives by authors, illustrators, researchers and education specialists in Africa. This suggests that it would be important to reach out to other players in 2024 to get an even more comprehensive view of new initiatives.
4. **Platforms** such as YouScribe, bookdash, and Koliko, are diversifying access to children's publishing. The **democratization of** low-cost **tablets** and the work of several associations are also promoting children's reading.

J. Future Plans and Goals

A forward-looking section that outlines Muna Kalati's strategic direction, goals for the upcoming year, and any new initiatives or expansion plans.

1. Increase the autonomy and capacity of the MK Cameroon Office

So far, the MK Cameroon Office has mostly depended on the Ghana Office for strategic planning and program implementation. Next year, the Research and Engagement Officer will be promoted to Team Lead of the Cameroon Office and will build a team to support the implementation of activities in Cameroon. While there would still be a unified strategy, the Cameroon strategy would be given more flexibility and freedom in defining its own strategic plan and priorities that are aligned with the local realities in Cameroon and other Francophone countries in Africa.

2. The need to coordinate planning of events on children book in Africa

This year, we noticed a [significant and non-neglectable interest for children book publishing](#).

Even though this is laudable, it also resulted in clash, situations where children book fairs were been organized in different countries at the same time. For example, the Morocco children book fair happened immediately after that of Guinea; and the Benin children book fair also happened at the same time than that of Cameroon. As an Association of children book professionals, Muna Kalati therefore envisages to bring the organizers of all existing and future children book events to improve planning and enable more professionals to attend these events, which are all important and just need a better coordination.

3. Increase monetization of Muna Kalati Services

Since our establishment in 2017, all our services were free to anyone interested. We reached out to writers, publishers, librarians and book promoters from Africa to conduct interviews, podcasts, book reviews, book launch, event coverage etc. entirely free. While this was essential in the early years, it is now required of us to set up [sustainability systems](#) to ensure continuity of our interventions and maintain quality. In the last quarter of 2023, we started proposing our paid services to publishers and authors who needed professional literary journalists specialised on children's books to cover their events. One of our unique value propositions is the fact that Muna Kalati is still the only existing media and network specialized in children's book publishing in Africa.

Publishing on our platforms guarantees access to a niche of children's book professionals, the largest currently in Africa, with about 700 members active on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) (461 members), and [WhatsApp](#) (108 Members).

4. Develop digital solutions to solve the biggest problems in book industry

Next year, we would be putting more energy and resources in creating apps to accelerate the distribution and diffusion of children educational resources in Africa and beyond.

K. Resource mobilization and financial management

This section includes the audited financial statements, such as the statement of financial position (balance sheet), statement of activities (income statement), and statement of cash flows, providing transparency about the organization's financial health and how funds are utilized.

From donors in Germany and Italy : 99.15 dollars

From activities to promote children's works and authors: 133 dollars.

From Kabod Group, parent company: 8,305\$

Contact Information and Additional Resources

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/muna-kalati>

Facebook: https://web.facebook.com/AssoMunaKalati/?locale=fr_FR&_rdc=1&_rdr

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/munakalati.asso/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/@munakalatiafricanbooksgame6032>

How can specialists in children's literature get involved with us?

We work with a network of researchers, teachers and academics who have one thing in common: a burning desire to increase diversity in children's literature worldwide. If that's also your case, you can reach out at research@munakalati.org to:

1. Share your research findings or ideas through blog posts, documents or opinion pieces.
2. Share updates or event announcements about children's and young people's literature
3. Submit **book reviews, analyses, bibliographies** of children's books, etc.
4. Submit job offers, opportunities or competitions.
5. All content can be submitted by e-mail to research@munakalati.org.

They're talking about us: [ActuaLitté](#), RFI, [Intenational Board of Books for Young People \(IBBY\)](#), [International Literacy Association \(ILA\)](#), [Takam Tikou](#), [Cameroon Concord News](#), [Global Book Alliance](#), [Mondoblog](#), [Afrolivresque](#), [Afrikhepri](#), [Nkafu Policy Institute](#), [Thot Cursus](#), [RIPAO](#), [African Development Bank \(AfDB\)](#) etc.

OUR PARTNERS

